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ABSTRACT

A literature review examined major trends in organizations and training and the ways in which evaluation may help drive training impact. In addition, 3 case studies and 18 interviews were conducted in the United States t. study evaluation methods. Recommendations about the use of evaluation for training impact were then formulated, and four Dutch experts on evaluation and training were asked to react on the recommendations in the Dutch context. Characteristics identified in the literature were illustrated with an example from one case study of a company that sells medical products by telephone. The following steps were essential: (1) conduct a needs assessment; (2) design and deliver training iteratively; (3) get the supervisor and employee together before the training to discuss it; (4) follow up on the training; and (5) store evaluation information in an electronic database. In contrast to the opinions of U.S. evaluators, Dutch experts believed that the training consultant should not be responsible for the involvement of supervisors, and further indicated that evaluation should be used sparingly by the training consultant because it is often seen as threatening in the Dutch context. Reasons for these differing perceptions are discussed. Four tables present study findings. (Contains 13 references.) (SLD)

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EVALUATION FOR TRAINING IMPACT

Insights from advanced practices

Paper presented at the AERA meeting, April 1994, New Orleans

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1. Introduction

This study started from the belief that evaluation should not only investigate the impact of training programs, but should also help improve training impact by being an integral part of the training development process. Evaluation activities that are undertaken early in the design process may yield information about problem areas and may help solve these problems early on. Evaluation during and after the training event may direct and also increase the transfer of training and program improvement.

Starting from this assumption, a literature study was carried out, resulting in a review report. The focus in this literature review was on major trends in organizations and training, and on ways in which evaluation may help drive training impact in view of these trends.

Many of the suggestions that were found in literature were on the level of ideas and assumptions rather than practical experiences and findings validated by research. Therefore, a qualitative study of exemplary evaluation practices was carried out in the USA, to get more concrete how-to-do examples. By means of three in-depth case studies of ongoing projects and interviews with 18 experts in the field of Human Resource Development, examples of sophisticated uses of evaluation were gathered. Special attention was paid to evaluation methods, the problems that were encountered and the ways in which they were solved.

The data have been analyzed with Hyperqual, a computer program for qualitative data analysis. In the analysis process, the following steps were undertaken: reviewing interview reports; formulating categories; formulating code words for each category; coding each interview report on paper; entering code words into the computer; selecting and printing information per code word; selecting and combining the most essential categories; writing the report.

Based on the analysis, recommendations about the use of evaluation for training impact were formulated. Four Dutch experts on evaluation and training were asked to react on the recommendations with comments from their point of view and with elaborations for the Dutch context.

Table 1 presents the research activities, methods and outcomes in chronological order.

Project parts (chronological)	Activities	Approach	Outcomes
Literature review	Literature search and analysis	Search in ERIC; PICA, Journals, SSCI, etc.	Literature review: Processes that are supposed to increase training impact Resulted in: Research questions for the empirical part
American part	- 18 interviews - 3 case studies	Partly structured, mainly unstructured In-depth, triangulation of methods: document analysis, interviews, observations.	Practical information on successful evaluation methods. Contextual information on respondents, problems, solutions, etc.
	Information analysis	Computer program for qualitative data analysis: Hyperqual	Categories of factors that increase training impact, the role of evaluation in this process Resulted in: Initial recommendations
Dutch part	4 interviews	Guided by initial recommendations	Comments on recommendations, suggestions for improvement Resulted in: Final recommendations

Table 1: Research activities, methods and outcomes.

The structure of this paper is as follows: Chapter 2 starts with the questions that guided the literature search and analysis. Following, the main conclusions from the literature review are summarized. Chapter 3 starts with the questions that guided the case study research and interviews on exemplary evaluation practices in the US. Next, a short description is given of one of the case studies. The main part of the chapter deals with some of the main findings. Each finding will be illustrated with information from this

case study. In chapter 4, the findings will be discussed in relation to the Dutch comments.

2. Literature review

2.1 Questions

One of the assertions of the study was that training and evaluation exist in a social context and, thus, should not be investigated in isolation. In the literature review, therefore, attention was also paid to the organizational or business context in which training and evaluation exist.

The questions that were formulated for this literature study were:

- What trends occur in organizations and their environment?
- What kind of trends occur in the field of Human Resource Development to cope with these organizational trends?
- In the light of these trends, how can evaluation help realize and improve the impact of training programs?

2.2 Findings

For the purpose of the study, training was defined as: "a provision that is aimed at creating learning processes that contribute directly or indirectly to the performance of employees and the organization" (Voerman, 1993). Training is increasingly seen and used as a strategy to deal with organizational trends and problems and to add to organizational success. In alignment with this view on training, increasing attention is given to what impact it is delivering.

In the study, evaluation was defined as "a systematic study into training contexts, needs, plans, operations, and effects, in order to assist the training professional and his clients in improving the value of the program and the utility of later evaluation" (Voerman, 1993). Although evaluation is often used to *assess* the impact of training programs, it was the assumption of the study that evaluation can also be very useful in *driving* the impact.

In the light of the current trends and challenges, literature posited four characteristics of training for impact, to which evaluation could add positively. In the following paragraphs, each of the four characteristics will be discussed briefly and followed by some evaluation questions that can be asked in different stages of the training development process: before, during, and after the training event(s) .

2.2.1 Integration of organizational needs, mission, and goals

Training quality is not longer judged on the basis of the quality of the materials or direct learning results, but on its contribution to organizational goals. Or, as Kaufman and Parry (1991) put it: "Good training is good for business - but only if it addresses organizational needs and is linked to the organization's business plan". A training that yields some effects but that was not needed, is not efficient for the organization (e.g. Boydell, 1976; Brinkerhoff, 1989; Garavan, 1991; Jacobson & Kaye, 1991; Kaufman & Parry, 1991; Romiszowski, 1981).

Identifying organizational needs and deriving the training goals from it, is an activity that needs to take place in the beginning stage of the design process. However, also during and after training delivery, there should be a constant awareness of the organizational needs, because needs may change in the course of time (e.g. Brinkerhoff, 1987; Minick & Medlin, 1983).

Examples of evaluation questions are given in table 2:

Before	During	After
- What are the organizational goals? - What business units are concerned with reaching the goals? - What factors are hindering the realization of the goals? - How desirable is it to reach the goals? - What are the costs of not reaching goals? - What are the likely costs of realizing the goals? - What are the costs of different alternative interventions? - What units will be affected if the goals will be reached? - What interventions are likely to solve the problem? - How do interventions relate to each other in realizing the goals?	- Have goals changed during the design process? - Is the training addressing organizational goals? - Are organizational goals likely going to be reached? - Are other interventions than training carried out at the right moment?	- To what degree has the original goal been reached? - Are further solutions needed? - To what degree are parts of the organization being affected by the training as planned? - Are there any unanticipated effects on different parts of the organization? - What can we learn from it for the future?

Table 2: Evaluation questions at certain moments in the training development process to relate training to organizational mission, needs, and goals.

2.2.2 Anticipation of trainee characteristics and needs

Based on an extensive research on transfer promoting factors, Baldwin and Ford (1988) concluded that several trainee characteristics influence the transfer of training, such as: motivation, high job-involvement, and confidence in successful completion of the training program. Parry (1990) also mentioned the trainees' ability to learn and his attention to be important. The individual characteristics of trainees should be identified in the training development process, especially because the 'traditional training population' is changing rapidly, due to the growing diversity in races and a changed ratio of men and women working in the organization.

Generally, however, it was reported that, nowadays, the focus of the assessment should go beyond the personal characteristics of trainees. As the training should have impact on an organizational level, it is regarded as important to yield information about work related problems and needs as about personal ones.

Evaluation questions in this respect are given in table 3:

Before	During	After
- What aspects of the task are trainees having trouble with? - Is it a performance problem? - To what degree is the performance deficit due to a lack of skills, knowledge, and attitudes? - To what degree do organizational factors influence the performance? - How difficult is it to perform the tasks? - How critical are errors? - How frequent are errors made? - What are the learning characteristics of the trainees? - What is the level of skills, knowledge, and attitudes of trainees? - How much time can they spend on the intervention?	- Are trainees the same (kind of) people as the training has been planned for? - Is the training attractive to trainees? - Do trainees know what goals they have to achieve? - Is the training addressing the trainees' problems and needs?	- Are the trainees applying the new skills? - Have problems been solved? - If not, how can redirection be best suited to trainees' needs and characteristics?

Table 3: Evaluation questions at certain moments in the training cycle to gear training to the needs and characteristics of trainees

2.2.3 Managers' and supervisors' involvement and commitment

According to Gill (1989), managers often tolerate training because they view it either as a staff benefit or as a means to remedy a skill deficit for particular employees. Often they do not consider it as critical to the successful operation of the business. Therefore, managers often place less value on training and development programs than they do on other organizational functions. If managers do not show that they value training, trainees are less likely to apply the new skills and the training effects will be minimal. Therefore, the training professional should strive for involvement of managers and supervisors in the training process (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Bowsher & Galbraith & Kaney, 1991; Garavan, 1991; Kaufman & Parry, 1991).

It is the training professional's task to make managers and supervisors aware of what it means to change into new working habits and to develop their skills in leading their subordinates through change efforts. The training professional also has to undertake activities during the total training process to keep management and supervisors involved and he should ask their help in implementing a successful training program.

Evaluation questions are listed in table 4:

Before	During	After
- Who has indicated the need for an intervention to reach the organizational goals? - Do supervisors of the units concerned see the need of realizing the goals? - What material and financial support is already available that will help the trainee apply the new skills, knowledge and attitudes? - Are supervisors preparing their employees to go to training?	- Is the supervisor showing interest to the trainee in-between training sessions?	- Is the supervisor supporting the new behaviors that were learned in the training? - Are the employees given the opportunity to apply new skills, knowledge, and attitudes right away? - Are they given time to use their new skills? - How do trainees know that they are applying the skills, knowledge, and attitudes correctly?

Table 4: Evaluation questions at certain moments in the training cycle for management involvement

3. Study of exemplary evaluation practices

3.1 Questions

Literature came up with a lot of suggestions for an effective use of evaluation. However, many of these suggestions were on the level of ideas and assumptions, and had not actually been validated by research or documented practice (the questions presented in chapter 2 were derived from the suggestions and are examples of what *could* be asked). Therefore, the main purpose of the second part of the study was to get practical and concrete examples of how evaluation for impact can be undertaken.

The following questions were formulated:

- What are examples of evaluation that had impact on a training or organizational level?
- What evaluation activities have been carried out?
- What was the purpose and focus of the evaluation?
- What was the object of evaluation?
- Who was involved?
- When and where was evaluated?
- What problems were encountered?
- How were they solved?

The study produced a wealth of examples of concrete successful procedures and instruments that training professionals have used in their training practice. Analysis of the data, using Hyperqual, resulted in general recommendations. These recommendations will be presented below. Because it would go beyond the scope of this paper to present all the practical examples for each of the recommendations, the recommendations will be illustrated by the information from one of the case studies. Therefore, first a short description of this case will be given.

3.2 Example of a case context

A case study was conducted in a fast growing company that sells medical products by telephone, as an intermediary between the manufacturer (the client) and the potential buyers in the medical field. If a client wants to bring his medicins under people's attention, a number of operators in the company start calling to different possible buyers, such as doctors, hospitals, psychologists, etc. Because the telephone is the only contact between the operator and a potential buyer, the operator should possess good communication skills that lead to a selling of the product.

With the rapid growth of the company, some time ago, the need was felt to get the work processes of the telephone operators more structured and controlled. Several operators were promoted to team leader and were supposed to monitor and coach their subordinate operators, and to assess their calls in order to give them suggestions for improvement, ultimately improving the company's services. Gradually, however, it became apparent that the team leaders were not assessing the phone calls in the same way and they were getting uneasy and not taking coaching seriously or not taking it the way that it was intended.

To solve this problem, an external agency with close contacts to the company was hired to carry out a needs assessment. Based on problem areas that were detected in the needs assessment, it was decided that a training would be a good solution. In the training, team leaders learned what good selling skills are and how they could recognize them. They learned a standard approach for assessing an operator's call, indicating areas for improvement, and communicating this to the telephone operator in a coaching session. These coaching sessions fall apart in three parts: indicating what the good aspects of the call are, indicating areas of improvement, and giving strategies to improve.

A lot of practice and evaluation has been built into this training. Not only training activities, but also the work of operators and team leaders are embedded in evaluation. Checklists are used to keep track of the quality of calls and quantitative measures are used to track progress and productivity. It is the company's experience that this evaluation is extremely helpful in planning and controlling the work process and quality.

3.3 Findings

3.3.1 Conduct a needs assessment

The needs assessment is a critical part in the training design process. The needs assessment has two parts, the first aimed at organizational needs, the second at trainees' needs. In practice, these parts merge more or less and information may be gathered in conjunction, but a clear distinction helps the training professional conceptualize better.

The goal of the first part is to identify what organizational effectiveness is and in what ways the current organization is falling short of being effective. Based on this first part of the needs assessment, the consultant should determine whether training is the best solution to solve (part of) the problem(s).

If training seems to be the best solution, the consultant should gather more specific information regarding the training context, trainee characteristics, and aspects of trainees' jobs and tasks that need some adaptations. If information has been gathered well in the needs assessment, the consultant should be able to derive objectives for the training

easily. These objectives should, thus, reflect organizational goals and can be measured afterwards to see whether they have been reached.

At a specific moment, the 'telephone company' wanted to determine the training budget for the next year and asked an external consultant, who was well-known in the company, to do a needs assessment to find out where they should spend money in order to get the biggest pay-back. In the $ 3000 needs assessment that followed, three kinds of activities were carried out: the external consultant had some interviews with the management team (4 persons), had focus groups with all team leaders and a representative sample of telephone operators (15 in total), and assessed operator performance by observing calls and evaluating the coaching session between operator and his team leader.

The main topics in the focus groups and interviews were: What is the strength of the company? Where on the road must the company be in a few years? What are the problem areas? What has to be improved? What are the priorities? What are the performance problems? Some follow-up questions were asked for each person specifically, depending on the findings of the focus groups and interviews.

The problems and needs that came out of these activities were put on paper and presented to the management team. They were given the opportunity to prioritize what problems should be handled first, which was decided upon unanimously to be the team leaders' coaching. At this moment, the question became: Why hire a training consultant? Is training the solution? In a discussion between management team and consultant, it became clear that the main problems lied in the performance of the team leaders, and that training would be a good solution.

The content of the training was based on the problem areas that had been detected in the needs assessment and for each problem area, improvement rates were established, thus using the information as baseline data.

When the training started, team leaders as well as the manager felt very committed, because the problems that were to be dealt with in the training, were those that were closely connected to their work and that they had indicated themselves .

3.3.2 Design and deliver training iteratively

An iterative approach to training design, as far as preconditions allow one to do that, turned out to be very effective in some cases. It allows the training professional to closely monitor whether the training is still geared to the needs of the organization and employees, and whether the training will meet or is meeting quality standards. Generally two kinds of iterative approaches were reported: the iterative design, and the iterative *delivery*.

The first one means that, during the design process before the official training event, subsequent parts of the training design are evaluated. Examples are an evaluation of the training outline by trainers, or an expert appraisal on training content. Another example is the pilot test. In the pilot test, a first or second version of the training is run on a small scale, with a representative sample of trainees, and information is gathered on

how it works, what the problems are, etc. This iterative approach assumes that experts, client, future trainees, and others involved, have time available at the moments the design needs to be evaluated.

Second, when the training is ready to be delivered, the iterative approach is also very effective. Although the major outline of the training sessions should be clear when the training starts, and major problems should have been detected in earlier pilots, the delivery of the training program in small pieces with some time in-between sessions offers some latitude for the training professional. It allows the trainers to evaluate a session and use the information to better implement the next session. This holds as long as a next session will deal with the same topic or whether there is time available to deal with the same topic, should that be necessary. Also, it provides trainees time to practice on the job in-between sessions what they learned in the training, which enhances their skills. It also enables to come to the next session with specific questions and problems that can be dealt with. Another advantage of the delivery in small steps is that trainees do not need to be away from their jobs for a long time, assuming that the training takes place not far away from the job.

The training, as given in the telephone company, had evolved from training for previous clients and had the standard outline ready. Before the training started, some content related examples were chosen from the team leaders' and operators' work, in close cooperation with the team leaders' manager, but that was the only adaptation that was made. Previous changes were aimed at increasing practicality, repetition and feedback.

The training itself was delivered in 6 sessions, each 4 hours long, one week apart. As home-work, the team leaders applied the skills that they had learned in the training in the coaching sessions with their operators. Herefore, they used a checklist that was handed out, discussed, and practiced in the training. After a few practice sessions and before the next training session started, the team leader had to show the manager real mastery of the skills, either by coaching the manager in a fake situation in which the manager played an operator, or by having the manager observe a real coaching session. In this way, it was made sure that a team leader was ready to attend the next session.

Each training session that discussed important new skills, ended with a 5 till 15 minutes evaluation. Trainees filled in an evaluation form and indicated (orally) the specific strengths of the session and identified areas for improvement (what aspects they needed to practice more) and how they would like to see that changed. These aspects were either dealt with by the manager in-between sessions, or were emphasized or practiced in the next session. Note that here also, the the evaluation starts from a positive point of view and asks for improvement strategies.

After each session, the instructor and the manager discussed in a few minutes how the training was going, what aspects would have to be changed, added or deleted in the next session. They also discussed how the team leaders were doing and to whom and to what aspects the manager should particularly pay attention during the homework sessions.

3.3.3 Get supervisor and employee together before the training to discuss the training

As had been read in literature, the commitment of supervisors is one of the most essential factors contributing to training impact. One of the ways in which management can show their commitment to their employees is to sit together before the training and make some appointments, regarding the application of learning and each party's responsibilities. In this way, the employee learns that he will be held accountable for the training and will have to apply newly learned skills, while the manager should guarantee that the time and materials needed will be available. Thus. these kind of sessions between supervisors and employees set standards for later evaluation of skill mastery.

> Usually, in the telephone company, team leaders and their manager meet once every week to check how everything is going. This did not change at the time of the training. In one of their weekly meetings, the manager explained each individual team leader why the management team had decided for a training. Because they had indicated problem areas in the needs assessment themselves, team leaders were aware of problems and the 'training news' did not come unexpected. All team leaders being informed, the goals for the training were outlined in a general meeting with all team leaders, manager, and training consultant. It was indicated what areas of coaching would be dealt with and what team leaders would be able to do after the training, under what conditions.
> Team leaders were told that they should pass an exam after the training. The passing of this exam would mean a prolonging of their job as team leader. If they failed, they would be given the possibility to try again after a while, but in the meantime, they would only work as operator. It was also enhanced that they would practice a lot in the training and in-between sessions, so that they would not take the exam unprepared. The checklists that were used in the training and coaching sessions would also be used in the exam.

3.3.4 Follow-up on the training

The goal of a follow-up is to reemphasize the content, the importance of skills application, and to hold the trainees and their supervisors accountable for demonstrating the skills.

The moment at which a follow-up should be done must meet two conditions. First, it should be as soon after the training as possible to make sure that the employee will not go back to old behaviors. Second, the time frame after the training must be long enough to enable the employee to apply the new skills.

> In the telephone company, the follow-up is done in the weekly session between the team leader and the manager, in which the team leader has to show the manager mastery of the skills. Questions that are discussed in the session are:

- What were the most important aspects of the training?
- What did the trainee learn in the training?
- Can the trainee apply the skills on the job?
- How well was the employee able to apply the skills?
- What factors hindered the employee to apply the skills on the job?

Because these weekly sessions are part of the work routine and will remain when the training has stopped, the training will be enhanced for a long time.

3.3.5 Store evaluation information in an (electronic) database

A very useful approach for those organizations and companies who want to keep close control over the quality of the workprocesses or the training, is to build an (electronic) database in which evaluation can be stored regularly. The advantage of storing evaluation information of training and job aspects in the database is to enable the client or consultant to easily track whether things have changed over time in either positive or negative way. It is especially useful in those situations in which a slight underperformance would have major consequences. Because it is often hard to mere observe slight underperformance, the use of the computer is supposed to help detect this underperformance earlier on. What is gained (financially) by turning the problems down in an early stage, outweighs the costs that have to be invested in the installation of the system. In other situations, one should ask themselve whether the investments in the system will be returned positively.

It might be worthwhile to input training evaluation information in a datafile, especially in those cases where training is part of a yearly offering. It will allow the professional and his client to easily draw conclusions regarding the quality and results of the training. This will increase the accountability of the training department in an organization.

The telephone company has built an elaborate tracking system over years.
Whenever the company gets an assignment from the client, a contract is made that specifies the minimum amount of products that will be sold within a specific period. For example, they may agree with the client to do 1000 calls and to end up with at least 200 orders within 3 months. These measures are translated into a number of complete calls per hour that each telephone operator has to reach, in order for the company to make profit.

Each time a telephone operator is making a telephone call, he stores information about the call in the computer, for example who he has called, whether or not the product has been sold, what further appointments have been made, etc.

One person in the company gathers the information from all operators into one file. He formalizes, formats, and prints the information. These prints - greensheets - that are pulled from the system each day before nine o'clock, give numeric information about what each individual operator did the day before. It provides information about the total hours the operator has been on the phone; the number of calls that have been made; the number of calls that were completed, which means that either the product is sold, or an appointment for a future call is made, or the telephone is out of order. The greensheets give also

information about the number of orders that were gotten, how accurate the call was, how many hours the operator has worked in total, and how many hours of over time were made.

Based on this daily information, a team leader is able to see how well an operator is reaching the campaign's objectives. For instance, if someone has completed three calls per hour instead of five, as written in the campaign contract, this operator performed under average that day. Using the sheets from some successive days, the team leader is able to identify whether or not this performance is structural and whether something should be done about it. The quantitative information from the greensheets is used in conjunction with the qualitative coaching and monitoring skills that the teamleader learned in the training: when the greensheets show that an operator is performing under level, the team leader discusses this with the operator and tries -by observing one of his calls- to detect the problem areas and to give strategies for improvement. In this way, a team leader is not only able to detect that an operator has some problems with calling, but also to indicate what the areas of weakness are and to give directions for improvement.

The information from this system is used every day, and adjustments to the operator's behavior can therefore be given in an early stage, increasing the chance of attaining the campaign's objectives.

On a weekly level, the spreadsheets give information about the progress of a campaign. It enables the campaign manager to check the likeliness of reaching the campaign goals. If necessary, adjustments can be made in an early stage. The use of these spreadsheets also allows the company to improve from campaign to campaign. For example, if the average sale score on one campaign was 30%, although the goal was 50%, probably the goals were set wrong. They can bear this in mind in the next campaign. The spreadsheets also enable the company to get an idea of the 'best sellers'. In one of the meetings I attended, an extra telephone operator had to be chosen for a new campaign. The group used the information from the greensheets to select a person.

4. Discussion

In the study on exemplary evaluation practices, concrete examples were found of evaluation approaches that were experienced to help get training impact by training professionals and other persons concerned. By looking in 'the kitchen' of evaluation, several examples of useful procedures and instruments were found. In this paper, we have tried to sketch the procedures and instruments of one exemplary evaluation practice as an illustration of how evaluation can reach impact. In the telephone company, evaluation proved to be a powerful tool in getting the team leaders on the right level of coaching, and it also served as a means to keep close control over work processes of individual telephone operators.

The American findings that were translated into recommendations were given to a few Dutch experts for their comments and reactions. A lot of the approaches and instruments that were described were judged to be useful in the Dutch situation as well.

However, the Dutch interviewees had two general reservations that went beyond the level of specific instruments.

First, it was the general opinion of the Dutch interviewees that the training consultant can only be held responsible for the quality of the training materials and training event itself, not for more, not for less. The training should be of outstanding quality and should enable trainees to learn the skills they need to learn. Although they valued supervisor involvement as important and the creation of an environment in which new learned skills can be applied very advisable, they considered it the responsibility of the supervisor. The importance of supervisor involvement can be communicated to the supervisors, but the degree of their involvement depends on themselves. Although the American interviewees also agree that skill application is the supervisors' responsibility, they claim that it is the training consultant's responsibility to try very hard to get supervisors involved. Examples of practices in which the training consultant's effort really got supervisors involved which led to positive results, makes this claim even stronger.

A second difference was found in the ways in which evaluation is and can be used. Whereas, in the exemplary practices, evaluation seems to be fairly integrated in the work and training processes, Dutch interviewees argued that it is almost impossible to realize this amount of evaluation in Dutch organizations. Evaluation is often seen as a threatening activity and, therefore, the training consultant should use it carefully and sparingly. An evaluation that goes beyond measuring direct training effects is difficult for the training consultant to realize. For example, a document analysis at the start of the design process to detect problem areas and gather base line data for the training was used and experienced in a few of the American projects as an efficient method, because the people involved did not have to invest large amounts of time in interviews. The Dutch interviewees argued that, generally, document analysis is beyond the scope of the training consultant as it may reveal confidential information. Also, evaluation situations other than manager-employee, such as peer evaluation, are difficult to realize.

Several reasons can be found for these differences between the American findings and the Dutch remarks. First of all, one should remember that the study in the States was aimed at finding examples from successful evaluation practices, as a realization of the suggestions in literature. This means that situations were found in which the project variables were such, that specific evaluation procedures and instruments were not only possible, but also considered useful. This does not mean that they would be possible and successful in every single situation. Although the recommendations themselves aimed at a certain level of generalization, they were illustrated with these specific one-case successful examples. On the other hand, the comments from the Dutch interviewees were more from a general point of view, rather than specific: to what respect would a certain

procedure or instrument be useful in a typical Dutch situation. Because of this broader view, it seems logical that they showed some reservations.

A second reason for the differences that were found in the US and Dutch part, can be due to a difference in evaluation tradition. In the Netherlands in general, it seems that evaluation is still seen as an activity that primarily aims at detecting failures and errors. As such, it is an activity that people are kind of afraid of. The example from the telephone company, however, shows that evaluation can have a positive nature as well. Here, the purpose of the evaluation was not to detect only negative aspects: each evaluation session started from a positive point of view: what were the good aspects of an operator's call, what were the good aspects of team leader's coaching, what were the good aspects of a training session. After determining the good aspects, the 'evaluator' indicated areas of improvement and, especially, strategies for how these improvements could be made. Used in this way, evaluation lays a constructive basis for change and improvement and is probably one of the reasons that this project was judged as a successful one: not the *mere* use of evaluation, but rather the *way* in which it has been used caused the success.

A third related reason for the differences seems to be grounded in what can be called an organizational culture difference. It seems that, in the Dutch organizations, there are fixed role patterns, that are hard to be broken: the role of the training consultant is to train, the role of the supervisor is to supervise, entering each other's territory is not allowed. It is not only that supervisors do not want training professionals to cross their paths, it even seems that training consultants themselves do not feel the need to change in a more collaborate direction. It seems to relate with one's view of what training is and should do: as long as training is regarded as a goal in itself, this clear role distinction can be held alive. The current trends in the organizational field, however, -that are also present in Dutch organizations- force us to regard training as a means to make the organization more effective, rather than a goal in itself. The examples from the US showed that training consultants need to become more flexible. That evaluation can add value in this process gets clear from the example of the telephone company.

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